



June 9, 2005

**STATEMENT OF TEACHER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM FOUNDATION
PRESIDENT LEWIS C. SOLMON ON THE PROPOSED "TEACH ACT"**

We are pleased that Rep. Miller and other Members of Congress have introduced legislation to address the challenge of recruiting, developing, motivating and retaining excellent teachers for America's neediest classrooms. With a large number of teachers set to retire over the next several years, and a growing demand, we face a critical shortage of excellent teachers in our nation's classrooms. Teacher quality is the most important school related factor affecting student achievement. This legislation addresses that need by providing incentives for outstanding students to consider a career in teaching, through keeping excellent teachers in the classroom, by improving the professionalism of teaching, and by compensating teachers for their demonstrated success in increasing student achievement. We are particularly pleased to see that this legislation will focus resources on the neediest schools in an effort to close the achievement gap and provide all children with outstanding teachers, every year they are in school.

This legislation recognizes the key factors in ensuring that every child has a high quality teacher in every classroom. These include strong, school-based professional development; the ability for teachers to move up a career ladder with more responsibility and more pay; a fair and clear evaluation system, that includes multiple evaluations by multiple evaluators over the course of the year and is based on research-based rubrics for teaching excellence; bonuses for teachers that demonstrate excellence in their classroom teaching and in raising student achievement.

We are very encouraged that there is a growing bipartisan consensus amongst education leaders that as a nation we must make teacher quality, particularly in high need schools, a top education priority. This challenge is one of the most critical facing the nation. We note that the President has proposed a "Teacher Incentive Fund" that would also focus new resources on the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers, and provide them with incentives to teach at high need schools. We look forward to these bipartisan efforts widely impacting student achievement and helping to create an excellent educational experience for every young person in America.

The Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) is very consistent with various aspects of the TEACH ACT, and we have seen such efforts are highly successful in the states in which we are operating. We look forward to the TEACH ACT enabling schools across the country to implement similar reforms. TAP is a comprehensive, research-based, whole school reform that increases student achievement by attracting, motivating, developing and retaining high qualified teachers. TAP is at work in twelve states involving more than 2,100 teachers and 35,000 students. The TAP provides teachers with a career path and advancement opportunities, compensates expert teachers for their skills and responsibilities; restructures school schedules to accommodate teacher-led professional development; introduces competitive hiring practices; and pays teachers based on how well they instruct and how much their students learn.

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